

2013 Voter's Guide For District 5 Neighborhoods

Bryn Mawr
Downtown East
Downtown West
Elliot Park
Harrison
Loring Park
Near North
North Loop
Sumner-Glenwood
Willard Hay

[See the NCEC District Map](#) (pdf)

**For Neighborhood Representative Members on
the City's Neighborhood and Community
Engagement Commission**

Candidate information and questionnaire responses

Compiled by the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department

Voter's Guides are available online at the City's Web site:
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/boards/ncec/WCMS1P-106113>.

The City of Minneapolis invites and encourages participation by every resident to each program, service and event within our city. Should you require an accommodation in order for you to fully participate, or should you require this document in a different format, please let us know by contacting 612-673-3737, TTY: 612-673-2157, at least 5 days prior to the meeting.

English: Attention. If you want help understanding this information, call 612-673-3129. **Spanish:** Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame al 612-673-2700 **Somali:** Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500 **Hmong:** Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab dawb txhais cov xov no, hu 612-673-2800

Voter's Guide District 5

As part of the neighborhood election process to elect 4 neighborhood representatives on to the City's Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC), applicants interested in serving were asked to respond to the following statements on their applications to be used in the Voter's Guide:

- ❖ How have your life/work/cultural experiences prepared you to be a neighborhood representative on the NCEC?
- ❖ How have you participated in your neighborhood organization?
- ❖ Describe why you want to serve on the NCEC.
- ❖ How do you plan to maintain a relationship with the neighborhoods you would represent, if elected?
- ❖ How do you plan to engage with under-represented groups within your district?
- ❖ Please list any community-based organization(s) with which you are currently involved.
- ❖ Please list all current paid and unpaid affiliations.

Candidates for District 5:

(To quickly navigate to a candidate's information, hold Ctrl and left click on candidate's name)

[Mariah Levinson](#) [Kenya McKnight](#)

The City-wide meeting to elect five neighborhood Commissioners will be held on Thursday, June 13, 2013:

City-Wide Election for Districts 1, 3, 5 & 7

Thursday, June 13, 2013

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Eastside Neighborhood Services

1700 2nd Street NE

Minneapolis, MN 55413

([Click here for a MAP and DIRECTIONS](#))

The building is ADA accessible. If any special accommodations are needed, please contact 612-673-3136.

All votes must be cast on June 13, 2013.

If you have any questions about the elections for Districts 1, 3, 5, and 7 or the Voter's Guide, please feel free to call Cheyenne Erickson at (612) 673-2052 or Howard Blin at (612) 673-3136. You can also find more information on our website at

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/boards/ncec/WCMS1P-106113>.

1. How have your life/work/cultural experiences prepared you to be a neighborhood representative on the NCEC?

I am a Qualified Neutral in the state of Minnesota. Before coming to Minneapolis, I worked for two of the country's largest dispute resolution centers, The Center for Conflict Resolution in Chicago, Illinois and The Safe Horizon Mediation Program in New York City. My dispute resolution work includes mediation, facilitation, assessment, collaborative processes, dialogue, restorative justice, and program design. I have been teaching conflict resolution education and social and emotional literacy skills for fifteen years in settings ranging from shelters to professional development conferences. I have a Master's Degree in International Affairs from Washington University in St. Louis and recently completed a Humphrey Policy Fellowship at the University of Minnesota. Additionally, I speak Spanish fluently and have worked abroad on development projects in both Latin America and Africa. My work at the Conflict Resolution Center includes the development and management of programs in the courts, public schools, county and city departments, nonprofits, and businesses; leading public policy initiatives; and training. I bring my knowledge of human relations to all my work in ways that provide me with unique insight into problems, deep understanding of the needs of individuals and organizations, and an ability to build strong partnerships.

2. How have you participated in your neighborhood organization?

My office does outreach to all neighborhood organizations and provides conflict resolution services on a sliding scale. I will be attending the Neighborhoods, USA Conference in May.

I work with many community and advocacy organizations including the Youth Intervention Programs Association, Hennepin County Youth Restorative Justice Collaborative, the Link, the Citizen League, the Second Chance Coalition, and many others. I have also worked closely with the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Minneapolis Police to provide conflict resolution services. I am currently providing conflict resolution services to neighborhood associations in district 7.

3. Describe why you want to serve on the NCEC.

Having lived in several cities that suffer from substantial urban decay and abysmal racial relations, I fully understand the importance of Minneapolis's neighborhood engagement efforts. For me, "We all do better when we all do better," is not a platitude. It is my experience. When cities do not engage and create opportunity for all residents, the quality of life erodes for all. I want to support the work of Minneapolis's progressive and innovative neighborhood engagement programs. I want to help keep our city vital and beautiful. I want to work to make our city more equitable. To NCEC I will bring my passion for urban living, serving my community, and equality; my ability to engage with people of all backgrounds and walks of life; and my skills as a mediator and facilitator, which I believe will have many applications to NCEC and the neighborhood associations.

4. How do you plan to maintain a relationship with the neighborhoods you would represent, if elected?

- attend neighborhood association meetings regularly
- attend community events
- sign-up for the neighborhood associations' newsletters and email lists
- build a stronger relationship between the associations and my office, the Conflict Resolution Center, to ensure that they know that free or low cost conflict resolution, collaborative problem solving, and facilitation services are available to them and their residents
- schedule regular times to meet with representatives of the associations

5. How do you plan to engage with under-represented groups within your district?

Working in the nonprofit sector, I am connected to many social and cultural organizations that work with under-represented groups. I would leverage these connections to engage with under-represented groups in my district.

In my work as a program manager for conflict resolution centers in three major metropolitan areas, I have built relationships with all members of a community including businesses, police, schools, social service organizations, immigrants, and minority groups. As a mediator, I listen deeply and learn the perspective of people that I am working with. I would use this skill to assess the barriers to participation – be they the need for more information, feeling intimidated, or busy lives - and use my creative problem solving skills to address them.

Additionally, I speak Spanish fluently, which will help me to connect with Spanish speaking residents.

6. Please list any community-based organization(s) with which you are currently involved.

I am a member of the following organizations:

- Citizens League
- Conflict Resolution Minnesota
- Hennepin County Youth Restorative Justice Collaborative
- Mediators Beyond Borders
- Minnesota Bar Association Alternative Dispute Resolution Section
- Second Chance Coalition Policy Committee
- Youth Intervention Programs Association Legislative Committee

7. Please list all current paid and unpaid affiliations.

Nothing beyond my position at the Conflict Resolution Center and the organizations listed above.

1. How have your life/work/cultural experiences prepared you to be a neighborhood representative on the NCEC?

In general I am a very civically involved person who cares and acts out of responsibility to directly be a part of the change and livability I want to see in my community. Over the past several years I have been engaged in community building through direct community organizing, policy making, advocacy, supportive roles and in leadership capacities around a range of social and economic justice issues such as housing, economic/business development, civil rights, youth, North loop development and family development, transit, juvenile justice and more. My initial civic life was inspired by my Great Grandmother who encouraged and built civic participation in being actively engaged within your community and surrounding environment. From there it continued to grow throughout life and took on a more meaningful role and deepened value as a younger adult which lead me to run for 5th ward city council in 2009. From that experienced I learned a deeper level of political engagement impacting public policy and have been on that track ever since which has lead to regional efforts that impact local communities. I have lived in Minneapolis for the past 30yrs and have lived in diverse communities all of my Minnesota life ranging from Native Americans, SE Asians, Latino, East and West Africans and other communities throughout Minneapolis. I've had the opportunity to work with all these communities on social justice issues that were general and culturally specific and cultural celebrations of all sorts. My 30yrs of living within the Minneapolis urban corridors, working regionally and within Rural areas of Minnesota has prepared me to embrace diverse communities of all sorts. Serving as the 5th district NCEC commissioner for the past year as well prepared me to continue building on the great work within the NCEC, NCR and the City of Minneapolis in bridging communities across the city creating a more unified one Minneapolis with commissioners from across cultures, social economic back grounds, disabilities, age and gender communities.

2. How have you participated in your neighborhood organization?

In 2007 I interned with my neighborhood association Northside Residents Redevelopment Council through the Local Initiative Support Corporation leadership program aimed at increasing leadership of people of color within community agencies. Through my internship I helped coordinate community meetings focused on a community benefits agreement with the University of Minnesota UROC development, fundraised for transit and youth initiatives, organized neighborhood board elections increasing more than 4 new board members in areas that had no representation and worked on projects as needed. Over the years I've remained connected to NRRC initiatives by attending community meetings and events. More recently connected more directly with NRRC around the 2011 Tornado recovery efforts advocating for increased support for recovery efforts. I continue to be very active with NRRC in various of ways around Board member recruitment of district residents interested in being more engaged, served as a community benefits agreement committee member for the Emerson North housing development initiative in 2012, served as the chair of the North Minneapolis Workforce Center development from 2012-13 as a near north NRRC resident keeping neighborhood interest at the front of development, very active resident leader with the Northside Transportation Network (NTN) who is a partner of NRRC around the Bottineau Transitway project as a Near North resident. I am greatly involved within my neighborhood association as an active resident directly within the neighborhood and a fierce advocate who works to continue to connect NRRC to resources, partner opportunities and a promoter of NRRC's historical contributions to North Minneapolis

as well as their existing community engagement and equity priorities connecting to regional strategies and efforts. I support their venues and attend meetings on their behalf if needed to help support staff leadership, resident development training & engagement opportunities and functions where and if I am able. I understand how important it is to have active residents whose work and efforts connect back to the neighborhoods they live in neighborhood. NRRC is very good in including it's residents in important initiatives, venues and opportunities.

3. Describe why you want to serve on the NCEC.

Having the pleasure of serving on the NCEC for the past year and have engaged in many important initiatives with my colleagues such as **NCEC Bi Laws** where we have finally completed the revision of the NCEC Bi-Laws and are currently working on a Policy & Procedures Manual to help guide our thinking around the revised Bi-laws. **Boards and Commissions Diversity Task force** This year a task force of NCEC commissioners who accepted the charge of evaluating the City of Minneapolis boards & commissions application and selection process, boards & commissions composition and provided the City Council with a set of recommendations that would help increase ethnic, disability, income, gender, age and social diversity on boards & commissions. We additionally provided recommendations to help improve the application and selection process as well as ways to increase neighborhood association's influence in selecting representatives for boards and commissions. Our recommendations are currently under review by the City Council **Election of NCEC Officers which was** a major Milestone for us, since NCEC began the commissions leadership has been by way of 4 facilitators who rotated functions monthly.

We are proud to have completed out Bi-Laws which allowed us to finally create a commission structure with leadership. **One Minneapolis** After a series of community meeting and discussions done by many former commissioners with residents throughout Minneapolis to create a community participation plan adopted by the City Council, it became clear that more inclusion was desired to better connect our neighborhoods. The city council charge the NCEC commission with spreading \$60k to community based agencies and culturally specific groups who were least engaged or represented. A task force of commissioners worked together to draft an rfp, create evaluation measures for outcomes and decision making criteria and process to review and select up to three proposals where the 60k would be divided into, announcement of groups coming soon. We have received an overwhelming response to the rfp which has lead us to request an additional \$500k to be considered in the next city council budget. **NUSA Conference** that will be hosted in our city this May 22nd-25th. The NCEC will welcome attendees at the Friday Luncheon and host a workshop on Friday discussing citywide neighborhood issues, NCEC experience, hosting guest from South Africa and more. **Neighborhood Plans** The NCEC is connecting with the NCR department to better understand the process, timelines and what role the commission may play within the process. **Blue Print for Equity** The Blue Print for Equity is a citywide initiative that is currently underway.

Throughout all of these initiatives I have remained a consistent voice supporting neighborhoods and its residents through Minneapolis and specifically within my district. I bring valuable experience, perspective and critical thought to our NCEC framework that has inspired clarity, reformed process and increased communications between the NCEC, NCR and the City Council that serves as a great benefit to Neighborhoods throughout the City and most importantly helps to empower all of us as commissioners to continue our great efforts of bridging our city. I've learned a great deal from my colleagues who come from different back grounds and are all knowledgeable about their neighborhoods and able to

work closely together to advance citywide equity. I have not served a full term and would like the opportunity to continue the great work I have started with my colleagues as a way to help sustain our efforts, further my experience working directly with government to shape policies/process impacting neighborhoods as a Minneapolis resident and to serve as a representative of historical communities of color which has decreased on the commission in activity yet is an very important element to advancing equity within our city that impacts communities of color the most showing itself through our current disparities.

4. How do you plan to maintain a relationship with the neighborhoods you would represent, if elected?

I will continue to reach out to each neighborhood association, attend their annual board/community meetings and venues when possible, continue to visit, shop and meet within neighborhoods in the districts while continuing to make every effort to connect with neighborhood association staff. I'll continue to work at understanding the needs and interest of neighborhoods and bridge opportunities where I'm able while staying updated on issues impacting neighborhoods, trends and opportunities etc. I remain open to feedback.

5. How do you plan to engage with under-represented groups within your district?

I currently build within my current relationships across ethnic, gender, age and social economic lines by attending cultural venues, having discussions about leadership and engagement opportunities and areas of interest. An example is on May 9th I attended a community engagement meeting in Brooklyn Park hosted by the African Immigrant Services targeting African Immigrant populations throughout the Northwest communities which includes areas within the 5th district. I attended a similar community meeting focused on SE Asian communities throughout the twin cities where I engaged, listened and learned the cultural interest, ideas and vision for these communities from their own perspectives. Very rich cultural experiences where relationships were built and being sustained. My goal is to continue sharing engagement, learning and opportunities within the district, cultures and in leadership capacities. The One Minneapolis is another great way to invest in building relationships with underrepresented groups within districts across the city and within the 5th district which has a large number of historical underrepresented communities within it.

6. Please list any community-based organization(s) with which you are currently involved.

Northside Transportation Network (NTN), North Point Health and Wellness, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Community Engagement Steering Committee, Equity Now Twin Cities

7. Please list all current paid and unpaid affiliations.

2013 Bush Fellow- Bush Foundation
2012-13 Hubert Humphrey Policy Fellow- University of MN
2012-13 Bottineau corridor intern- Nexus Community Partners
Metropolitan Council- Transportation Advisory Board & Midway Alternative Analysis Study
Neighborhood Community Engagement Commission- NCEC/NRP Policy Board
DFL Senate District 59- Outreach and Engagement Officer